

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-08

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 SSO-00 PRS-01 SAM-01 PM-03 INR-05

INRE-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 CPR-01 DODE-00 /039 W

----- 037311

R 061245Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8604

C O N F I D E N T I A L HELSINKI 975

LIMDIS

FOR UNDER SECRETARY SISCO FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MPOL, OVIP, FI (SUTELA, LAURI)

SUBJECT: GENERAL SUTELA VISIT TO US

REF: HELSINKI 916

1. I URGE AGAIN THAT WE SHOW GENERAL SUTELA, COMMANDER-IN CHIEF OF FINNISH DEFENSE FORCES, THE COURTESY OF A PROMPT REPLY ON QUESTION OF HIS VISIT TO US. REFTEL REPORTS HOW HE HAS LAID HIS CARDS ON TABLE REGARDING HIS DESIRE FOR VISIT TO US THIS YEAR TO BALANCE HIS VISITS TO USSR AND SWEDEN. I BELIEVE HE WOULD HAVE GREAT DIFFICULTY IN COMPREHENDING A LONG DELAY IN OUR REPLYING TO HIS FRANK OVERTURE.

2. CHIEF IMPORTANCE OF SUTELA VISIT IS NOT, HOWEVER, FACT THAT SUTELA HAS PUT US ON SPOT WITH HIS FRANK OVERTURE, BUT UNDENIABLE FACT THAT SUTELA AND FINNISH MILITARY GENERALLY REPRESENT MOST SOLIDLY PRO-WESTERN AND ANTI-COMMUNIST ELEMENT IN FINLAND. WITH FINLAND BECOMING INCREASINGLY INDUSTRIALIZED, THE STRENGTH OF SOCIALIST COMPONENTS OF FINNISH SOCIETY IS GROWING. FINNISH SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY, FINLAND'S LARGEST, IS COMING INCREASINGLY UNDER INFLUENCE

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OF RADICAL LEFT WING WHO ARE INCLINED TO ADOPT

POSITIONS INIMICAL TO US INTERESTS. I BELIEVE IT VITAL TO MAINTENANCE OF TRADITIONALLY GOOD TIES BETWEEN US AND FINLAND THAT WE DO ALL WE CAN TO PRESERVE GOOD-WILL OF FINNISH MILITARY AND ENHANCE THE STANDING OF MILITARY IN EYES OF FINNISH PUBLIC. THERE IS NO BETTER WAY, IN MY VIEW, FOR US TO DO THIS THAN BY RESPONDING PROMPTLY AND FAVORABLY TO GENERAL SUTELA'S BID TO PAY AN EARLY VISIT TO US AS LEADING MEMBER OF WESTERN ALLIANCE.

3. AS DEPT KNOWS, FINNISH GOVERNMENT HAS AGREED TO OUR REQUEST FOR VISIT TO HELSINKI MAY 18 TO 21 BY USS LEAHY. FINNISH ARRANGEMENTS FOR THIS VISIT PROMISE TO BE EXCELLENT AND CREDIT FOR SEVERAL PROTOCOL BREAK-THROUGHS IN CONNECTION WITH THIS VISIT SHOULD, I THINK, BE GIVEN TO NEW FDF LEADERSHIP UNDER GENERAL SUTELA. AN EARLY AND FAVORABLE RESPONSE ON SUTELA'S TRIP IS DESIRABLE IN ANY CASE, BUT I STRONGLY URGE WE TAKE ADVANTAGE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL CLIMATE OF USS LEAHY VISIT TO GIVE THIS RESPONSE TO GENERAL SUTELA BEFORE LEAHY VISIT ENDS ON MAY 21. AUSTAD

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY PERSONNEL, SOCIAL RECEPTIONS, MILITARY VISITS, GOODWILL VISITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 06 MAY 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: RowellE0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975HELSIN00975
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750158-0522
From: HELSINKI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750578/aaaactmt.tel
Line Count: 83
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: 75 HELSINKI 916
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: RowellE0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 13 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <13 MAY 2003 by ElyME>; APPROVED <29 SEP 2003 by RowellE0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GENERAL SUTELA VISIT TO US
TAGS: MPOL, OVIP, FI, (SUTELA, LAURI)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006